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## Hedging Language: Poetry vs. Accuracy

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Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Activity 1:

1 What are three vague generalizations about the United States?

a

b

c

2 What are some proverbs or slogans from your country or culture?

3 What are some popular songs that make universal claims?

4 Can you think of two sayings that contradict each other?

a

b

**Note:** Techniques for turning vague generalizations with more accurate, responsible statements:

- Add frequency adverb (sometimes, seldom, often)
- Weaken the verb (seem to, appear, tend to)
- Add modal (can, may, might,)
- Add qualifier (one of the best, an effective method)
- Identify conditions (when the information is known)
- Cite source (ex: “According to a 2013 WHO report...”)

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### Activity 2:

Can you rewrite a generalization about Los Angeles?

Can you rephrase a traditional proverb or popular slogan?

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### SEEKING CLARIFICATION: KEY PHRASES

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#### Checking what someone means:

- What do you mean by that? Do you mean...?
- In other words....?
- So are you saying...?
- Can you clarify that statement?
- Correct me if I'm wrong, but do you mean...?
- Sorry, I'm not sure if I got that. Are you saying...?

#### Asking someone to explain what they mean:

- Could you expand on that?
- Which means what?
- Which means what exactly? (more sceptical)
- What are the implications?
- Can you spin that out?
- Sorry, what exactly do you mean by that?
- Sorry, could you go over that again?

#### Checking that someone has understood you:

- Is that clear?
- Are you with me?
- Does that make everything clear?
- Can we move on?



### Collecting Advice on Writing Professional Emails

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please find a short article that helps professionals successfully write emails – in English. You might search the Harvard Business Review, The Economist, the New York Times, and other appropriate sources. Read the article, take notes, summarize, and review it for your classmates.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Web address: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_ Publication date: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 Please describe the article. What's the main idea?
- 2 What writing tips did the article provide?
- 3 How practical did you find the advice? Why?
- 4 What was the strongest part? Why?
- 5 How could the article have been improved?
- 6 Write five new vocabulary words, idioms, or expressions related to the topic.
  - a
  - b
  - c
  - d
  - e
- 7 Who do think is the target audience for this article? Why?
- 8 Why did you choose this particular article?
- 9 Based on what you've learned, what makes an effective email? Why?
- 10 How would you rate the article on a scale of 1–5, with 5 being the highest? Why?

**“I do love email. Wherever possible I try to communicate asynchronously. I'm really good at email.”**

—Elon Musk (1971- ), American entrepreneur and TESLA founder



### Mastering Email Etiquette

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

We have all been misunderstood at some time or other. Email, while an essential professional tool, can also cause misunderstandings in school and at work.

How can we prevent future misunderstandings? Answer the following questions about email etiquette and discuss with your classmates.

1 What are five ways that emails can be misunderstood?

a

b

c

d

e

2 Have your emails ever been misunderstood? Why? What happened? Briefly share a misadventure in email writing using the space below. Please include the following details:

- Who was the audience?
- What were the text, context, and subtext of the email?
- What was the source of the misunderstanding?
- How could the misunderstanding have been avoided?

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“Whatever you can say in a meeting, you can put in an email. If I have questions, I’ll tell you via email.”  
 —Mark Cuban (1958-), American entrepreneur and basketball team owner”



## Should You Buy It?

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Product reviews are increasingly popular, and you can find many places to share reviews. For your next class, pick a consumer product to review. Do some research online about the product. Find at least two sources of information. Then fill in this worksheet and create a product review. Share with your classmates.

Product: \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Source: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 Do you own the product?
- 2 What is the purpose of the product?
- 3 Who is the target audience for this product? Who usually uses it?
- 4 How is the product used?
- 5 What does the product cost?
- 6 What competitors does the product have?
- 7 Are there some possible dangers or misuses of the product?
- 8 What did you learn from your research about this product?
- 9 Would you recommend this product to your classmates? Do you have some concerns about this product?
- 10 How would you rate the product on a scale of 1–5, with five being the highest? Why?

“The customer is always right.”  
—American proverb



## Writing an App Review

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please research an application available on the App Store or Google Play. You may want to limit your search to free apps. Find out as much as you can about this app through personal use and/or online research. Then, review the app and share with your classmates.

- 1 Describe the app you chose. Is it a game or a productivity tool? Something else?
- 2 Why did you choose this app?
- 3 Who is the target audience for this app?
- 4 Are there any similar apps available? What are they?
- 5 What is your favorite thing about this app? Why?
- 6 Are there any user reviews or ratings (in English) for this app? What is the overall or average rating?
- 7 Do you agree with this rating? Why or why not?
- 8 What did you learn about this app that you didn't know before?
- 9 Do you recommend the app to your classmates? Why or why not?
- 10 How would you rate the app on a scale of 1–5, with five being the highest? Why?

“**Technology is a useful servant but a dangerous master.**”  
—Christian Lous Lange (1869-1938), Norwegian politician and Nobel Prize recipient



Responding to Yelp! Reviews

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Bad reviews aren't all bad; sometimes they are a valuable source of feedback for businesses that want to improve. Find a review of a hotel, restaurant, or other business that describes a negative customer review in detail. Then answer the following questions.

- 1 What is the name of the business?
- 2 What type of business is it? What services do they provide?
- 3 What complaints are made in the review? Are they related to service, efficiency, or something else?
- 4 What is the tone of the review? Does the reviewer come across as reasonable or rude? Why?
- 5 Is the criticism in the review constructive/helpful? Why or why not?

Now, imagine you are the owner or manager of this business. How would you respond to this customer's complaints and concerns? Write a response to the reviewer below.

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“The details are not the details. They make the design.”  
 —Charles Eames (1907-1978), American designer





### Choosing a Local Restaurant

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you use Yelp.com yet? Find and share a positive review for a local restaurant that you like. Pick a favorite local restaurant, do some research, and pick the best review— in English. Use this worksheet to tell us about the review.

Remember restaurant reviews should provide examples and details. Tell us about a special restaurant—in English—and help us find a place to eat delicious food.

Restaurant: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Review: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 Why did you pick this review?
- 2 How does the reviewer describe the restaurant? What kind of food does it serve?
- 3 When was the review written?
- 4 What do you know about the reviewer?
- 5 What does the reviewer say about the restaurant’s atmosphere?
- 6 How did the reviewer describe the restaurant’s service?
- 7 What did the reviewer eat?
- 8 What was the best part of the restaurant review?
- 9 Does the reviewer recommend the restaurant? Why?
- 10 How often have you been to the restaurant? What makes this restaurant special?

“One man’s meat is another man’s poison.”  
—Latin proverb





**Be a Movie Critic!**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Can you recommend an excellent movie? First, select one of your favorite films. Second, go to **imdb.com** or **metacritic.com** and research your selected film. Third, take notes. A strong movie review will combine both facts and opinions. Use this short worksheet to describe the movie and prepare to share your informed opinion with your classmates.

Movie Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Year released: \_\_\_\_\_ Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Actors/Actresses: \_\_\_\_\_ Awards: \_\_\_\_\_

How many times have you watched the movie? Where?

**Plot Information:**

- 1 Where does the movie take place?
- 2 When does the movie take place?
- 3 Who are the main characters? Can you briefly describe them?
- 4 What happens in the movie?
- 5 What is the best part? Why?
- 6 Does the movie surprise the audience? How?
- 7 How could the movie be better?
- 8 Who do you think would like this movie?
- 9 How would you rate the movie on a scale of 1–5, with 5 being the highest? Why?
- 10 Can you choose five adjectives to describe this movie?

“Every great film should seem new every time you see it.”  
—Roger Ebert (1942–2013), American film critic

